

Message Text

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ACTION EPA-02

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, GR, OUIP, CCMS
SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP ON EPA VISIT OF MAVINOS YEROULANOS

REF: STATE 163251

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTTEL, CCMS COORDINATOR AND EMBOFF MET WITH MEMBERS OF YEROULANOS STAFF IN THE GREEK SECRETARIAT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR PHYSICAL PLANNING AND THE ENVIRONMENT (SPPE). EMBASSY AIRGRAM A-9 OF FEBRUARY 24, 1978, WHICH COVERED GOG ORGANIZATION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS, IS BEING SENT EPA (STRUTHER) IN THE EVENT COPY NOT PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED BY EPA/OIA.

2. IT IS LIKELY THAT MUCH OF AMBIGUITY IN YEROULANOS PRESENTATION TO EPA REFLECTS NATURE OF HIS ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE IN GOG. THE GREEK APPROACH TO GEARING UP BUREAUCRATICALLY TO COPE WITH GROWING ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS HAS BEEN TO ESTABLISH AN ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATE AND SECRETARIAT BODY (HEADED BY YEROULANOS), WITHIN THE OMNIBUS MINISTRY OF COORDINATION. ACCORDING TO PROFESSIONALS IN THIS UNIT, IT WAS CONSIDERED MORE APPROPRIATE TO LEAVE THE DIRECT ACTIONS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS UP TO THE RELEVANT TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS. IN
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PRACTICE, GENERAL POLICY MAKING, SUCH AS BUDGET ALLOCATIONS AND APPROVAL OF PROGRAMS, IS VESTED IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. CONSEQUENTLY, THE SPPE ATTEMPTS TO PLAY A CATALYTIC ROLE VIS-A-VIS THE TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS AND A STAFF REVIEW FUNCTION FOR THE COUNCIL. SPPE MEMBERS APPARENTLY PERCEIVE THEIR TASKS AS FOLLOWS: (1) DISSEMINATION OF RELEVANT ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION, (2) RAISING THE ENVIRONMENTAL

CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE TECHNICAL DEPARTMENTS, (3) COMMENTING ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION, (4) INITIATING LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS, ALTHOUGH ONLY INFREQUENTLY, AND (5) RECOMMENDING R&D PROJECTS TO THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION-SRTA (ANOTHER UNIT OF THE MINISTRY OF COORDINATION). THE LATTER WILL ACTUALLY ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO R & D EFFORTS ONCE A CURRENT REVIEW OF PRIORITIES IS COMPLETED (SEE REFTEL). SPPE ALSO THEORETICALLY HAS THE AUTHORITY, THROUGH ITS POSITION IN THE MINISTRY FOR COORDINATION, TO FUND SPECIAL PROGRAMS, BUT TO DATE, IT HAS NOT CHOSEN TO EXERCISE THIS OPTION, PREFERRING TO WORK THROUGH PROGRAM AGENCIES.

3. THE TYPES OF COOPERATIVE PROJECTS IN WHICH EPA MIGHT ENGAGE WITH THE GOG WOULD INVOLVE JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE SPPE AND SRTA AND APPROVAL BY THE COUNCIL. ANOTHER ACTOR ON THE SCENE WHICH MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IS THE COMMITTEE FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT, WHICH ADVISES THE COUNCIL AND IS SERVED BY THE SPPE. THE COMMITTEE INCLUDES VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS; INDUSTRY, LABOR, AND NGO'S. ALTHOUGH THIS BUREAUCRATIC LANDSCAPE APPEARS FILLED WITH OBSTACLES TO EFFECTIVE BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL COOPERATION WITH GOG ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES, IT APPEARS USG HAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO WORKING THROUGH SPPE, AND ITS SIBLING SRTA. QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL STAFF APPEARS QUITE HIGH AND INDIVIDUALS ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO IDENTIFY AREAS FOR COLLABORATION.
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4. FOR THIS MOMENT, PRIORITIES HAVE NOT BEEN FORMALLY SORTED OUT, BUT BOTH SPPE AND SRTA ARE CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN A REVIEW PROCESS WHICH SHOULD RESULT IN A TENTATIVE AGENDA BY LATE SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER. ONE SPPE STAFFER OFFERED A PERSONAL VIEW OF TOP PRIORITIES: (1) COPING WITH INDUSTRIAL WASTES, PARTICULARLY TOXIC OR OTHER HAZARDOUS WASTES, (2) POLLUTION OF ESTUARINE AREAS, AND (3) URBAN PHYSICAL PLANNING.
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